STAR-49?

OF HAPPENINGS
ORTO RICO

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"WHERE THE ROYAL PALMS LIFT THEIR STATELY HEADS IN GRACE AND GLORY, AND IN RHYTHMIC MOTION, SWAY THEIR MAJESTIC PLUMES"

STAR-49?

A Story of Happenings in Porto Rico

By

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Author of "Japan for Juniors," "Coming Americans," "Alaska for Juniors" "Great Voyages," "Pioneers," "Fair America," etc., etc.

THE WOMAN'S BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS
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INTRODUCTORY

ONCE upon a time—but it was long, long ago—people lived all their lives in about the same spot, and that spot was the place where they happened to be born. Naturally, should a man in those days leave home for a long journey, his departure was looked upon as a most remarkable and stirring event. It was very mysterious, too, for no one could say where the man was going—for no one, not even the traveler himself, could know. No, for although *now* even the boys and girls "know it all," in those good old days even the wisest man, going more than a short distance from his home, simply plunged into the Great Unknown and was soon lost to the knowledge of his fellow-men.

One such daring traveler was a boy named Marco Polo, who, starting from his home in Venice, journeyed eastward very far toward the rising sun. He was absent for many, many years, but one day he turned up again in Venice, having many a marvelous tale to tell to open-mouthed and delighted listeners. After a time, the thought came to him to write an account of his truly remarkable experiences. Very likely you have read his book, called "Marco Polo's Travels." If you have not, there is a great pleasure before you. Notice especially what old Marco had to say about a wonderful island called "Cipango," rich in gold and silver and precious stones.

Many years after Marco's death his book was printed, and its wonderful stories led men to make long journeys in the search for the treasures so glowingly described in the book, and, strange though it may seem, Marco Polo's travels in the Far East had some part in the discovery of America, and some influence in the queer naming of the new lands discovered.

That golden isle "Cipango" was part of "the Indies," and Columbus, on the day when the sight of land threw his men into tremendous excitement, thinking he had reached golden and silvery and spicy *India*, gave that name to the beautiful islands he had discovered, and that is the reason our story is to be laid about the "West Indies," which are *not* India, nor are they "West" from India.

This, though, is after all a small matter. What really matters to us just now are the happenings in one of the islands which *we* call Porto Rico.

"Star Forty-nine?" will tell about some of these happenings.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Discovery	9
II.	The American Occupation . .	15
III.	The Coming of the Book . . .	23
IV.	The First American Census . .	29
V.	The Door to Citizenship . . .	35
VI.	Sanitation and the Steam Roller	43
VII.	The Day of Glad Tidings . . .	49
VIII.	The Children of Cuba	57

STAR-49?

A Story of Happenings in Porto Rico

CHAPTER FIRST

THE DISCOVERY

FROM a certain small seaport in Spain three little ships had sailed away in the dim dawn of a morning,—months ago,—amidst tears and loud wailings and expostulations.

Notwithstanding the fears of the people, *straight out* sailed the ships into far western waters, called in those days the Sea of Darkness, unknown, but believed to be full of fearful dangers.

And—what made it worse—the tiny little ships were under the command of a man who held the crazy notion that the earth was not flat but *round,* and that by sailing *westward* he would at length reach those rich lands of the Far East about which Marco Polo had written.

Let him think so then, the people thought, and suffer for it! The rest of the world (and especially the men, women and children of Palos) know better and never expect to see again captain or ships or sailors.

So there was, at first, breathless silence and awe, and later the wildest and most noisy excitement when one day one of these identical little ships was seen standing in at the mouth of the river!

On board was the "crazy man," sure enough, who *had* found —as he thought—the "Indies" and the rich and beautiful island of Cipango; and the earth *was* round after all!

So they no longer called the captain crazy. Oh, no! he was now the greatest man in Spain, who was very soon invited to meet the Court, and when he entered the throne room, the king and queen stood up to receive him, and told *him* to sit down, which was a very wonderful thing for a king or queen to do. Such triumphal processions as he had, too, when people climbed trees and clambered to the roofs of houses in the hope of catching even a glimpse of him, and of the "Indians" he had captured, upon whom they looked with as great curiosity and wonderment as we should feel in gazing upon visitors from Mars.

When Columbus began to prepare for a second voyage, he had no difficulty in getting ships or in man-

A VILLAGE IN PORTO RICO

ning them, for naturally the stories he and his sailors told of the rich lands they had seen,—of rivers rolling over golden sands, of mountains teeming with gems and precious metals, where the groves produced spices and perfumes and the shores of the ocean were sown

with pearls,—these marvelous tales we may be sure lost nothing by repetition, and they were repeated far and wide.

So now we see them ready to sail—a fleet of seventeen ships with their cargoes stowed away—such a

AGUADILLA

cargo! And such bustle and excitement as there have been in getting it aboard. There were horses and cattle and domestic animals, for Columbus intended to establish a colony upon one of the islands he had discovered. The ships carried, therefore, grains, seeds of various plants, vines, sugar cane, grafts and saplings; there were also great quantities of trinkets,—beads, hawk-bells, looking-glasses, and other showy trifles to be used in trading with the "Indians." Besides all these, there were provisions in abundance, medicines, and much ammunition.

And at length the slow-coming morning dawned on which they would start. The gray waters of the bay of Cadiz turned to sparkling blue, and the white sails of the fleet took on a rosy glow from the light of the rising sun. The fresh winds blew, and off they

sailed but southwestward, so that the ships might take on wood and water at the Canary Islands, which, if you know your Kingsley and Hawthorne as you should, will become before your imagination not as the Canaries but as those Isles of the Blessed, where grew in the gardens of the Hesperides the golden apples stolen by Hercules.

ONE OF THE NARROW STREETS OF PORTO RICO

But Hercules must have left some on the trees, for when Columbus arrived at the Happy Islands he saw there golden and delicious fruit from which he took seeds, and "they" do say that the luscious golden balls hanging now on West Indian trees—*we* call them oranges—had their origin in those golden apples of the Fortunate Isles.

Having taken on also a supply of fresh water, the fleet sailed to the westward, and after many days Columbus saw beautiful purple mountains rising from the sea. The first island was seen on Sunday morning, and ever since it has been known as Dominica or the Isle of Sunday Morning.

Not long after this, Columbus discovered *our* Island. Turning southward he sailed along its coast

all day long—a beautiful sight and a fine sail. Nevertheless, it was a joyful moment when they turned the corner—as it were—of the island and sailed up the western coast, for they were sadly in need of fresh water, which they found in the hills above a little "Indian" village at which they landed; and this spot is called "the watering-place" (Aguadilla) to this day.

Columbus named this beautiful island San Juan de Bautista; sailing northward and eastward he found a fine harbor facing a fertile country. This he named Puerto Rico, which we can easily see means "Rich

THE HEIGHT OF THE SUGARCANE

Port." Later the island was called Puerto Rico, while the city which grew up on an island in the harbor took the name of San Juan.

Three cities claim to be the spot of Columbus' first sight of the island, Aguadilla, and Mayaguez—on the western coast—and San Juan.

We will choose Aguadilla as the first landing place and gain from its monument the date of the first "happening" in our island, namely, its discovery, on November 19, 1493.

Fifteen years later a colony was established on the island. The natives were made slaves by the Spaniards and forced to work so cruelly hard that they soon died out, and negro slaves were brought from Africa to take their places. They brought with them African superstitions and heathen practices; the few Indians who survived, and those of hardier life brought from South America, also retained many of their strange religious ideas. The Spanish priests baptized the people into the Catholic Church, but taught them very little of Christianity, and never taught them to read, so the lower classes of Porto Rico were left almost without knowledge of the Bible, or of a pure Christianity.

There are some rich people on the island who have beautiful homes and whose children have been educated in Spain, but the great mass of the people continued to be poor and very ignorant and very few of them strong or well, until suddenly there came to Porto Rico the second great happening, about which the next chapter will tell.

OLD-TIME PLOWING

CHAPTER SECOND

THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION

SOMETHING must be about to happen in San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico.

It is still very early in the morning, yet crowds are beginning to gather in the city, and in many a shack in the country, children are excitedly chattering, for word has somehow reached them that great things are to happen to-day. Far up on the mountain side is perched one such little shack. The sun is now just high enough to shine through the doorway, not through the windows—because there are no windows. There is no smoke rising cheerily from the chimney, because there is no chimney—nor any fire suggesting a cheerful breakfast, and a pleasant warmth, for this is an October morning, remember.

But in this summer country the delightful morning needs no fire, for neither in October nor November nor in any other month is there ever the fine, bracing tang of a frosty morning.

It is a beautiful morning. Such an exquisite sky bends over the mountains. Our skies are blue and beautiful, but are they not sometimes a little hard—looking as though the lovely fleecy clouds sailed along *against* the blue?

But there, the golden and rosy and gleaming white clouds of this early morning float and melt into that soft and tender light out of which tropical skies seem to be made.

A VIEW OF SAN JUAN AND THE HARBOR

The far-off mountains, too, are of a soft blue or violet, but the nearer ones show to their very summits luxuriant foliage in every tint of green. Some trees are in bloom, and on others are ripe and luscious and brilliantly colored fruits. Many have both flowers and fruit.

Not far away a rushing little river falls tumultuously down the mountain side, rising again in a fine

A STREET CAR IN MAYAGUEZ

white mist through which shine the exquisite colors of many rainbows; and the river is near enough for the music of its fall to reach us. All about us are gorgeous flowers. So you see that *outside* of the house the children's home is beautiful beyond the power of words to describe, but *inside* that little palm-thatched hut, called a shack—well—suitable words might perhaps be found, but the description would not be at all pleasant to read.

Instead, let us watch the children as they come trooping out—all but Teresa and Isabela and little Juan.

It is a great disappointment to them and a sorrow

to the tender hearts of their brothers and sisters that on this day of great things, the little girls and baby Juan must lie in their hammocks in the dreary, dreary, dark little hut.

It must be so, for they are too ill to get up, but Carmelita, and Maria, and Dolores, and Antonio, and Pedro are going with their father to San Juan, while the mother stays at home to care for the sick ones.

THE ADVENT OF THE TUB AND WASHBOARD

On a tiny fire of charcoal outside the shack the mother makes some coffee, and the children drink a little of it. They do not have "a cup of coffee," for the shack boasts no such luxuries as cups—but let us hope the coffee tastes just as good out of gourds! and that the banana taken with the coffee makes a satisfactory breakfast, for they have nothing beside.

Dressing takes a very short time for the reason that there are few clothes to dress in, but at least they are clean. The little river, having recovered from its headlong fall, is now running more quietly over a

stony bed not far below the house, and in its rapid waters the mother yesterday washed the clothes, and on those stones they were beaten, then washed again and spread upon rocks to bleach and dry in the sun.

So the children's clothes, while sadly limited, are really dazzlingly white. Shoes and stockings they have none, but this they are used to, and they start off

LEARNING TO PLAY (*Protestant Episcopal Mission*)

with much excited chatter about what they shall do when they reach the city.

The most important thing will be to secure standing room in some spot commanding a good view of the ships in the harbor, of the soldiers and—surely—of the big flagpole on the fort.

"A SIGNIFICANT SIGN OF BETTERMENT," INTEREST TURNING FROM COCK-FIGHTING TO BASEBALL (*Baptist*)

They trudge on patiently, and indeed are so much interested in all they see that the way does not seem long.

It is a narrow path—really only a trail—they are following; so narrow is it that in some places the little ponies going also to the city, carrying produce to the market, and children—sometimes even men, bigger than themselves—to the coming "show," can scarcely squeeze through between high banks coming down on either side. Very steep it is, too, but the children and the little beasties carrying such heavy loads are wonderfully sure-footed.

Our children reach San Juan at last and the father is allowed to stand with them in a place quite near the Governor's palace. Their excitement becomes more intense as the sun mounts higher in the heavens, but they wait patiently.

"How long we have been standing!" says Carmelita at length. "It *must* be nearly noon." "Hark!" Dolores says. Yes! surely the sweet-toned, far-off bell of the cathedral is sounding the first stroke of twelve! Then a louder bell peals out and a heavy stroke booms from the great clock on the City Hall. The soldiers and all who understand the meaning of what is to follow take off their hats and stand in silence. The last stroke of twelve sounds. "See!" exclaims Maria, pointing toward the flagpole on Morro Castle.

Every eye is lifted as a flag mounts up the staff. In a moment there floats in the clear air the red, white and blue of the Stars and Stripes, to be henceforth the flag of these children and of all children of Porto Rico —(and now we spell the name not in Spanish, but in plain United States).

"Hark!" says Dolores again, for "sweet and clear, and sweeter, clearer, farther going," sound the last echoes of the Spanish bugle at the old fort, sounding

for the last time from behind the walls of Morro Castle and San Christobal.

The children can see long lines of Spanish soldiers marching out of the forts and next they see long lines of American soldiers marching in, and after a little from the walls of Morro Castle booms a salute of twenty-one guns.

The great day was over for the children, except that as they walked back through the city's narrow streets they saw flying from all the public buildings not the red and yellow of the Spanish flag, but the red, white and blue of America.

"A great day, oh, a very great day!" said the children, but little they knew how great or what it would mean to them all, even to little Teresa and Isabela and Juan.

This day was the Birthday of Freedom for the Porto Ricans, but they will "celebrate" on the Eighteenth of October, not on the Fourth of July, and the year of the birthday was 1898, not 1776!

THE NEW ORDER OF THINGS ON A SUGAR PLANTATION.

CHAPTER THIRD

THE COMING OF THE BOOK

HAVE you noticed that in the pictures of Porto Rican shacks there are generally a large group of people, including many children, "standing around," evidently with nothing of interest to do?

There is just such a group about *our* children's house on the mountain side and it is true that there is nothing interesting to do. "Surely the children might *play,*" you say. But they do not know how to play. Many of them have never even seen a doll, and as for "playthings" or games, they are scarcely known among the poor of Porto Rico. "Then why do they not read?" you ask. Because they do not know how to read. In all this large family, not one has ever seen a book!

"Why don't they sew, then?" They don't know how to sew—but if they did know how, they have nothing to sew.

"Why don't they tell stories or look at pictures?" Because they have no pictures and know very few stories.

These people are desperately poor. Poverty is not so bad or hard a thing as it is with us because in Porto Rico there is no suffering from cold, and where one can "lie in a hammock and pluck a banana from a bunch above him by simply raising his arm, or stretch out his foot and dig a sweet potato with his toe," no one need starve. But, while one can live on bananas

and sweet potatoes, one cannot grow strong on them, and many of these people are only half fed, and scarcely nourished at all. So you see life is not interesting or satisfactory, but very dull, and often it is full of suffering because of sickness, which no one knows how to cure.

No wonder the children "stand around," for there is really almost nothing else to do. Yet, as we watch Carmelita and Antonio, we see that something must

FLOWERS AND FRUITS OF PORTO RICO

be happening, even here, for they are looking intently down the steep little path, through the thickets of banana and coffee bushes, and tall tree ferns. A man—a white man—carrying a bag which looks heavy, is plodding up the hill. Now, *any* kind of a man coming up this path is a strange and unusual sight, but this man is exceedingly interesting, for as he comes nearer it is seen that his face and walk and clothes are not those of a Porto Rican. Who then can he be? Who, indeed, but an "Americano!" and the children are all

excitement immediately. He *is* an American, sure enough, but happily he can speak Spanish. His voice is pleasant and his eyes are kind, and he at once captures the affections of these warm-hearted children. The mother invites him into her little house and brings him the best refreshment "the larder" (but there is no larder) affords. They always do so, for the Porto

A GOOD SUBSTITUTE FOR WATERMELON

Rican peasants are as hospitable and kindhearted as the day is long.

The visitor seats himself outside the house in the shade of a great tree and chats pleasantly with the father and mother while the shy little children draw closer and closer.

Presently he takes from his bag a Book and the children look on in round-eyed wonder. He lays it, open, on his knee and as he talks turns the leaves slowly, showing many pictures. Antonio and Pedro come close to get a better look. Then Carmelita and

SUNDAY-SCHOOL AT PONCE (The Church Review)

Dolores pluck up courage, and lastly Maria, suddenly losing all fear in her great curiosity, asks aloud, "Who is *that?*"

The picture she looked at was one *you* have seen a hundred times—but these children had never seen it before. It was "Christ blessing little children,"

BASKET-MAKING (*Protestant Episcopal Mission*)

which we know and love so well, and so did Carmelita and Dolores and Maria love it after the "Americano" had told its beautiful story. He told them that Jesus made the sick children in the picture well—"Teresa is sick," little Maria said, "and Isabela and little Juan. Can Jesus cure them?" "Yes, little one," the Americano said. Then the man went on his journey, leaving

a picture like that in the Book, saying he would come again some day, and in the meantime they must come every week to a "Sunday-school" he would have on a spot nearby. "Every Sunday," he said, "I will tell you a story, and teach you to sing." He stopped at many little palm-tree houses, winning the love of the children, with whom he always left a picture, after telling them some lovely story from the Book. The children, and the older people, too, listened with all their hearts, hearing for the first time those life-giving words. "These are good words," they said.

And so the Bible came to Porto Rico, for when our Flag went up on the island Christian people in the United States said, "Where the Flag goes, the Bible must go, too," and it was the American Bible Society that sent the man with the Books. This was the beginning of the coming of the Book—the greatest and best thing that ever happened in Porto Rico. We remember it by the day the first agent of the Bible Society landed at San Juan—December 10, 1898.

A SUNDAY SCHOOL UNDER THE PALM TREES

CHAPTER FOURTH

THE TAKING OF THE CENSUS

THE occupants of the little shack on the mountain side were sorely puzzled and troubled, too, by rumors that, in some way, had traveled up to their out-of-the-way home.

They had learned that in a few days some one would come to their house bringing a long paper filled with strange questions which they must answer, and answer truly. "Why do 'los Americanos' want to know all these things?" Dolores asked her mother. Her mother could not tell her—nor could her father.

The poor people had had many troubles during the past year, for in August had really occurred what every summer they feared might come—namely, a terrible hurricane. The awful wind had uprooted the great trees upon which they depended almost for the bread of life. The rain, falling in solid sheets, had utterly destroyed their tiny plantation of coffee bushes and the overshadowing banana trees, and the precious little garden patch had been washed down the hillside. Teresa and Isabela and Juan had become weaker and weaker, for in the rainy season, just passed, they must remain so much of the time in the dark, close room of the dark little house, and at all times the people are afraid of the air and keep sick people away from it. But this is not the house we first saw, for that was blown away by the hurricane. This did not matter so

very much, for the father built another in a short time, and at no expense. Its frame was roughly made—just poles lashed together. This frame was covered with bark and roofed with palm leaves—a poor little house, you will say, but it was at least a shelter from the rain, the wind (if not too violent!) and the burning sun.

And it was really a great advantage for it to be fresh and new. There were fewer centipedes and—other things.

AS COOKING IS DONE IN PORTO RICO

There had been all these calamities, and now—this new trouble! The poor, ignorant mother might have taken heart of hope could she have known all the good this mysterious and much-dreaded visitation would in the end bring to her and her children, but she did not know and felt decidedly ill used that her affairs were to be thus questioned.

But really the enumerators were the ones to be pitied. Their task, none too easy at any time—for

Porto Rico was in those days almost destitute of roads —presented frightful difficulties, since the hurricane and the rainy season combined had made traveling over the mountain trails and pony bridle paths almost

A "BAKER'S WAGON" IN PORTO RICO

impossible. The rivers and streams, of which Porto Rico—about three times the size of Rhode Island—has *thirteen hundred,* were many of them now raging torrents, the trails had become rivers of mud, and

washouts and quicksands innumerable added to the perils of the way.

Nevertheless "los Americanos" had need to know all the facts asked for in the census papers in order to carry out many plans "Uncle Sam" had made for

CHILDREN OF PORTO RICO

the welfare of his people. Therefore, by order of the President, the War Department of our Government authorized the taking of the census. Porto Rico, with three outlying islands, was divided into seven depart-

ments; each department was subdivided into small districts—and on the 10th of November, 1899, the work was begun. About three weeks later there appeared at the door of the palm-tree house on the mountain, not the rough and fierce officer whose coming they had all dreaded but a gentle and kind-faced woman. Now this was quite wonderful, for never before in Porto Rico had women been employed in any public business except teaching. And after all, the questions were not so terrible—at least not when asked in a kind

AMERICAN CHURCH AT PONCE *(Baptist)*

voice and in a way which made it easy to answer. The enumerator knew just how to manage, and went away with all her questions answered, and with the warm affection of eight ardent little hearts, and beside all this her skilful and gentle hands had made poor little Teresa and Isabela more comfortable than they had been for many a long day.

When the papers were all in and the answers had been tabulated, "Uncle Sam" knew the exact number of people on the island, the number of men and women who could not read or write—about 600,000—and the number of children needing an education. He had found out, too, that the number of children under

ten years of age is larger in proportion to the population than in the United States, and that there are very few elderly people in Porto Rico.

This is mainly because the people disobey the laws of health, have little nourishing food, live in houses without ventilation and have very little pleasure or enjoyment in their lives. Uncle Sam had learned some of the reasons for the great amount of sickness on the island; about the soil, and what crops could best be raised; about the sugar crop and the coffee plantations and the tobacco fields; in short the Government had now the knowledge needed to enable it to carry out many benevolent plans—plans to make home life happier, and to benefit the people in securing a larger business life and in building up stronger and more healthy men and women; and to start new movements which will result in the prosperity of the people in every way. You will see before we finish our story that thousands of grown people, and many, many thousands of children have reason to bless the day that brought to their doors the courageous, patient and persevering enumerators for the first American census. And that day must have been between the 10th of November and the 20th of December, 1899.

AMERICAN BRIDGE BUILDING

CHAPTER FIFTH

THE DOOR TO CITIZENSHIP

WHEN the census takers had finished counting up the figures furnished by the enumerators, it was found that Porto Rico contained 322,393 children of school age, and that of these only eight out of every hundred were attending school!

So you see ninety-two out of every hundred could not read or write, and our children of the shack on the mountain side were among these ninety-two. But they had once seen a schoolroom—not a school house—for never in all the years from the day Columbus discovered the island until the day our flag floated over Porto Rico, had a school house been built on the island. The few schools there were were held in little dark rooms in the house where the teacher lived, or perhaps in a poor little place over a shop—but a school *building?* Never!

Still, as I was saying, Carmelita and Antonio had once seen a Spanish schoolroom, for they had a cousin who went to school.

This was in the days "before the war," when the red and yellow Spanish flag waved over the island.

In the first place the room they saw was small and—even in this land of glorious sunshine—very dark; there were in it no benches nor settees, nor chairs, nor blackboards, nor maps, nor school books, nor pencils, nor—"Then why *do* you call it a schoolroom?" you ask.

"THE OPEN DOOR TO CITIZENSHIP"

Why, because there *is* a desk behind which sits a teacher, and there are thirty boys seated on the floor, repeating aloud—*very* loud—some sentences the teacher has just read from a *very* small book on geography, and later there will be a little "mental" arithmetic, somewhere on the easy side of decimals. So is it not a schoolroom? There were very few of these even, as we may know, since 296,181 children did not go to school!

This, though, as I said, was in the old Spanish days, before Porto Rico had expressed a desire to be taken over by "los Americanos." The Spanish authorities did not believe in teaching "the people."

It was different afterward and is becoming more different every day, for you know the spirit of America means education, and through it an equal chance in life for *every one.*

So, very soon after the Spanish flag came down and our flag went up, there was a tremendous and splendid "happening" in Porto Rico—namely, the establishment of free public schools after the American idea. This was so great a happening and so bright a day for our island that it is well worth while to remember that it occurred on October 1, 1899.

Once again our children of the mountain shack (and hundreds of others as well) are all a-quiver with excitement. It is the early—very early—morning of January 15, 1900.

Now, your teeth need not chatter, and you need not think of icicles and piercing winds and a blinding blizzard, and dressing and breakfast by artificial light! for such shivering sympathy is quite uncalled for. You would think so if you could catch the exquisite beauty of the dawning of that day and feel the delicious warmth of the sunshine; if you could gather with these gay-hearted little children, riotously blooming and most

beautiful flowers that we are happy to catch a mere glimpse of in some greenhouse on a January morning—if you could see those mountains covered to their tops with the richest of foliage of living greens, if you could, when the walk and the warm sun had made you thirsty, sit down and regale yourself with refreshing cocoanut "milk" from a nut that has just dropped from that towering and most graceful cocoanut palm, and—if you choose, and if you are not very wise—with oranges, large and sweet and juicy, and bananas, of which you can count at least eight varieties; the finest pineapples in the world, bread fruit, custard apples, melons and grape fruit—in short, if you had been taking that charming *summer* morning walk down to San Juan you would have lost for the time even the memory of cold, bleak winds, of leafless, fruitless trees and of far-reaching stretches of dazzling white snow.

It will not do, though, to loiter so long for Porto Rico is ceasing to be the land of putting off till to-morrow whatever should be done to-day! The clocks and the *hustling* of "los Amercanos" are changing all that, and even our mountain children have learned that if "los Americanos" *say* that the flag will mount the pole on the new school house at twelve o'clock, it *will* mount it precisely at twelve—and they would be sick with disappointment should they be too late for the Salute, for their ardent hearts warmly love our flag—ours and theirs.

So Carmelita and Dolores, Maria, Antonio and Pedro and even Carlos—the wonderful cousin who knows how to read and write—hasten along—and when they come to a turn in the path and see Morro Castle and the beautiful blue sea beyond, they actually run—but not for long, for they are not very strong, poor children! They arrive in San Juan breathless—

but in time (the clock has *not* struck!)—and reach the new buildings of the training school—the *first* to be built for that purpose. They are none too soon, for already a great crowd of young people are gathered in front of the building.

The children's eyes shine and their hearts thump wildly—for they stand in a good place and can plainly see the building and all that is going on. There are two young men standing on the platform below, and two young ladies are on the balcony above. These four have been chosen to raise the flag. Oh, proud and happy four! You should see our children's absorbed faces as they watch every movement. Slowly the flag mounts to the top of the staff—the next moment, catching the fresh breeze coming in from the blue, blue sea, our beautiful banner waves proudly above the school house—the destined protector, enlightener and friend of the children of Porto Rico. Every head is uncovered as the Salute is given. Our children's hands are reverently raised to their foreheads and from that moment a passionate allegiance burns in their hearts.

And so they turn homeward through San Juan—such a beautiful, clean San Juan as it is getting to be! for does not the white of the banner stand for purity, and the blue for fidelity, and the red for love for all mankind? So of course the island must be made clean and healthful. As the children trudge along on the way home, each one carries a precious possession—a tiny American flag! As he counts the stars, Carlos says with sudden purpose, "I am going to write to the President of America and ask him to put in a *little* star for Porto Rico," and write it *he did!*

Once more a great day dawns for our little people, not yet, alas! for patient little Teresa, and Isabela and baby Juan, but Carmelita and Dolores and Maria,

Antonio and Pedro, are happy and proud beyond words that even their vivacious tongues can utter.

A great day? Oh, *yes!* Such a day as these children have never known—such washing of hands and faces in nature's own bathroom! for this morning there was a little rumble of distant thunder—and the mother quickly rubbed all the faces and hands with soap—Porto Rican soap—and sent the children to stand out in front of the shack and presently the shower bath was turned on somewhere up above, and down it came—a real tropical rain—not in drops but in sheets. It did not last long and the sun came out bright and shining, and in a moment you could not tell that anything had happened—and the children came *in,* also bright and shining—and you could tell that something quite remarkable had happened. Such sweet, clean hands and faces, *now!*

Then there had been such washings of clothes, such beating on stones, such bleaching on rocks—in short, such getting ready for school! For it is true that our little people are going to have a school, and, please notice, in a school *house* at that. It is, to be sure, three miles away. But what of that? And on this great day of the dedication the children are not going to walk. Bless you, no! Can you not *see* that line of ox-carts—*eight* of them? A grand procession —and it was grand, too, to see boys and girls gathering from the little shacks dotted all over the country-side. And now here are the carts and fifty boys and girls standing in each, and each boy and girl waves our flag! And there are *eight* carts, remember. Oh, a *fine* procession! There is room for our happy children, and off they all go, cheering the American republic and singing its national airs. And little Teresa and Isabela from their hammocks watch them out of sight with wistful eyes.

But it is such a *great* day when they reach the new school house. The Governor is there and some members of his cabinet, and the great Commissioner of Education himself. And some of the children are dressed in red, white and blue, and they sing "America" *in English,* and this is the way it sounds:

"'Mee condree, teez of zee,
Sueet land of lee-bertee,
Of zee we zeeng.
Land were mee faders died,
Land of zee peel-greem's pride,
From efree mountain side
Let freedom reeng.'"

And then the flag is raised and the Salute is given, and "The Star-Spangled Banner" is sung, and no voices are sweeter than those of *our* children, even though—like some of the rest of us, nearer home—they do not know the *words* very well. But they will! just give them time.

HOPE FOR THE GIRLS OF PORTO RICO

CHAPTER SIXTH

SANITATION, AND THE STEAM ROLLER

ANTONIO and Pedro are helping their father get ready to go to market. The new little garden on the mountain side has done very well (giving three crops of some vegetables and four of others) and no roaring hurricane has visited the island this year. So the family are quite cheerful, and the children watch the preparations for the market trip with intense interest. Their eyes sparkle and shine with anticipation of pleasures to come, as they talk excitedly and with many gestures of the wonderful things their father will, perhaps, bring home in exchange for his bananas and oranges, sweet potatoes and yams. The little piles of fruits and vegetables look pitifully small to us; happily, to the children they look bigger.

All is ready at last; every fruit and vegetable that can possibly be spared from the needs of the family has been packed in the pony's baskets, and now he is starting off, with the baskets well filled and the man sitting on his back with his feet sticking out over the baskets. The pony is very small; fortunately, the man is not very big; but, as it is, the poor pony almost staggers under the load.

For a short distance the trail, or bridle path, is in tolerably good condition but before long the man's troubles begin. There were heavy rains yesterday, and last night an avalanche of earth had come sliding down on the trail. The path borders a precipice at this

point and is not too wide at any time, so the situation is a perilous one.

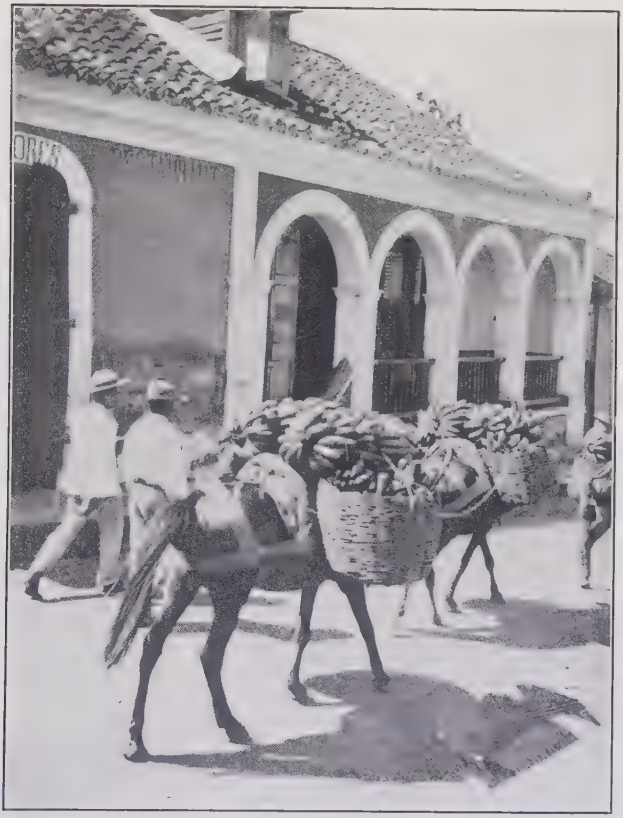
The man dismounts, takes the bridle rein and crawls around the landslide in front of his pony. If the pony *should* go over the precipice he will let go of the bridle! for why should he follow the pony? The pony gets safely around and the man mounts again. Before long they come to a river swollen to a torrent; never mind! it must be crossed, even if the pony be thrown by hidden rocks in the stream. They

"AN ENGINE OF PROGRESS"

come alive out of this—and jog on. The trail is now very narrow—two horses could not pass one another—but what's this? Truly, a pack train of donkeys loaded with great bags of coffee! And, alas! the bags stick far out on either side. Their driver is in the rear and the donkeys press steadily forward—and *our* pony must either fall over the ledge—a thousand feet or so—or be thrust far into the bushes on the other side. He thinks it better to be pushed into the bushes. After this all goes tolerably well for a time, but soon the trail takes wild plunges down the mountain, each

moment the pony seems about to turn a somersault—notwithstanding, he reaches the bottom safely—and then that exasperating trail proceeds to climb *up* the opposite slope—as steep as the roof of a house.

The resolute pony accomplishes this feat, too, and



AS THEY WENT TO MARKET IN THE OLD DAYS

pretty soon comes to a stretch of level ground, but here is mud that sticks to his heels as if it were glue. Many ponies had passed this way before, leaving a series of ridges and holes. Fortunately, the pony

takes short steps—into the holes—a longer-legged animal would have tried to walk on the ridges, with unhappy results.

Next is a precipice, sheer and deep, the poor pony's hind feet slip and down he starts—backwards, but the forefeet hold, his rider climbs over his head, and the pony scrambles back into the trail.

PONCE HAS NOW A $300,000 TROLLEY SYSTEM

And so they go on to market—in those days such trails were the only way to go—for the Spaniards had never given the people any roads, except for military uses. One such magnificent road there is across the island from the capital to Ponce on the southern coast, and a few miles beside; that (and a few wretched cart roads, perhaps) is all the road-making the Spanish rulers gave Porto Rico in nearly four hundred years.

Of course, the pony had just as bad times getting home again. In one place he finds almost a river of mud to be crossed, and down, down, down sinks the pony, but with a mighty flounder he pulls himself out—no one knows how.

They *do* say that oxen are sometimes drowned

in the mud, and that a heavy two-wheeled cart drawn by as many as ten oxen has been hopelessly stalled in the same sticky mud.

One day, soon after their father's return, our children see a queer looking object on a new road that "los Americanos" are making. What can it be? It has immense broad wheels and at intervals emits short, sharp shrieks which frighten the children, but its bark is much worse than its bite, and it is in reality —as the children will soon be old enough to know—one of the best friends Porto Rico has ever had, and so their father thinks as he now (in 1910) "goes to market"

A SUNDAY SCHOOL (*United Brethren*)

over a fine macadamized road which sweeps along not far from their little home on the mountain.

The steam roller is doing such splendid work that already every considerable town has communication with the sea, and before long they will have *macadam* communication with one another! And then life, even in the shacks, will not be so deadly dull and monotonous, and the people, having good and cheap "ways to market," will not be so miserably poor. A good road improves all the conditions and helps the people to be better in body, mind and in morals, and the real name of the strange and terrifying creature our children saw that day may well be what it has been called, "An Engine of Progress."

You remember that the census takers found many, many sick people, and it was at first thought that the cause of the sickness, and especially the disease called "tropical anæmia," was too little nourishing food and the unsanitary conditions prevailing everywhere in the streets, and in the houses of the poor.

Our soldiers said the Porto Ricans must be either lazy or half-starved or sick, and they did not think they were lazy. After a time a great discovery was made by Dr. Ashford, a surgeon in the American Army, who discovered the cause of the disease and the way to cure it. Was not that a splendid happening?

The census takers said that 800,000 people of Porto Rico had this disease—a terrible one, which takes away all strength and vigor. Through Dr. Ashford's discovery, over 250,000 persons have been cured, and it is hoped that by the use of this cure and by teaching the older people in their homes and the children in the schools what to do to prevent the conditions that cause it, this terrible disease will be utterly stamped out, and this will mean that "sanitation," as given them by "los Americanos," has brought *new life* to the people of Porto Rico.

LIFE IN PORTO RICO

CHAPTER SEVENTH

THE DAY OF GLAD TIDINGS

IT would pain your hearts could you see little Teresa, Isabela and Juan as they look now. They are several years older than when first we saw them, but they look scarcely any taller, and they are certainly thinner, and weaker, and they suffer a great deal, more than they need, if their poor, ignorant mother only knew how to relieve them.

She and the children have lately had a bitter disappointment. The mother had been told by some neighbors that if she would make a pilgrimage to a certain shrine in a far away city and bring back with her an amulet or charm for each of the children the disease would leave them. So she had made the journey over the hard trails, walking all the way, and fording many streams, until at last, almost worn out, she reached the city and was directed to the shrine; to reach it she must climb a long, long flight of stone stairs, on her knees, repeating prayers at each step. She toiled up all the long way under a burninig sun, reached the shrine at the top, paid the money, which had taken her and her husband a year to save, and received from the priest the amulets.

There was the long and perilous journey home again over those awful trails, but her heart was now light with hope, and she thought little of the dangers and difficulties of the way.

So she traveled patiently on, and one day came again to the little shack on the mountain side. How joyfully and hopefully she bound the charms on Teresa's throat and Isabela's ankle, and little Juan's arm, for she had been told to place them where the pain was sharpest.

Now, fear and dread were changed to hope in that little house. "When Teresa is well," "when Isabela is well," "when Juan is well," they were continu-

THE G. O. ROBINSON ORPHANAGE, (*W. H. M. S. of Meth. Ch. N.*)

ally saying, while they waited—waited for a long time —but Teresa did not get well, nor Isabela, nor little Juan. Teresa—poor little child—cried aloud from the hurt in her throat, and brave Isabela could scarcely bear the sharp stabs of pain in her foot, and Juan became thinner and thinner until his arms were like thin little sticks.

Such a sorrowful family they were in these days. They had always kept the picture of "Christ bless-

ing little children." It is pinned up now where the light from the door falls upon it. Teresa loves to look at the kind face of the Lover of Children.

"Mother," said Carmelita, one day, "the man who gave us the picture said Jesus Christ could cure Teresa, and Isabela, and Juan."

"But I do not know how to ask Him, Carmelita," the mother said sadly. "I have never heard about Him. How should I know?"

DISPENSARY AT MAYAGUEZ (*Presbyterian*)

"You must ask Him in your heart," said the child.

Dolores spoke to Carmelita and Maria, and together they went up the mountain where a thicket of coffee trees hid them from sight.

"Let *us* ask the kind Jesus to cure the children," said Dolores. The picture man said, "He is not far from any one of us, and if we ask in our hearts He will hear us."

"You tell us the words, Dolores, and then we will all say them in our hearts."

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AT THE ORPHANAGE IN SAN JUAN (*Methodist*)

They knelt down behind the coffee trees and looked anxiously at Dolores—who began at once in her soft, sweet voice: "Kind Jesus, Teresa and Isabela and little Juan are so sick they are crying with the pain. The man who gave us the picture said you could make them well. Please do. We give you our love, Carmelita, Maria and Dolores," and the three children whispered the words over "in their hearts."

Down at San Juan, where the salt breezes blow, a

THE PRESBYTERIAN MISSION SCHOOL AT MAYAGUEZ, P. R.

hospital has been built, given in part by the Christian Endeavorers of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, in remembrance of the Great Physician who spent his life on earth in making people happy and who "went about doing good" and making sick people well. In this hospital was a children's ward, all clean and shining and having little white beds. On the wall, facing the door, was the picture, "Christ blessing the little children," and over it in letters of blue and silver, Jesus' own words:

"Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not."

Already there are in the ward some sick children, and a sweet and kind-faced nurse ministering to their needs with gentle and skilful hands.

The doctor comes softly into the room and asks

CHURCH AT SAN GERMAN, P. R. (*Presbyterian*)

how many vacant beds there are. "Three," said the nurse. "Have them ready," the doctor says, "they will be needed to-night."

For "the man who gave the picture," hearing of the opening of the hospital at San Juan, had come down to tell the doctor about the three sick children in the little shack on the mountain side.

Early the next morning, this man and a missionary from San Juan came up the mountain to the palm-tree house.

They told the father that the doctor in the new Christian hospital at San Juan was sure his sick chil-

dren could be cured if he could bring them down to the hospital.

Now, how do you suppose they could be taken down that steep path and all the long way to San Juan?

The father and mother think of a way. They will carry in a hammock, first Teresa, then Isabela, and lastly they will come back for little Juan!

But the picture man said that he and the missionary would carry Teresa in her hammock, the father and mother would take Isabela, and Antonio and Pedro, big boys now, could be trusted to carry Juan, poor little mite—his weight was almost nothing.

Presently the little procession started, and Carmelita and Dolores and Maria, left behind, smiled happily at one another. "It must be that Jesus is in the hospital at San Juan," they said.

Teresa, and Isabela and Juan were kept at the hospital a long time, but the day came at last when they were sent home to the palm-tree house, well and strong, with color in their cheeks and light in their eyes. You would never know them to be the same children—Carmelita, and Dolores and Maria look at them with shining eyes and many times they say "in their hearts": "Kind Jesus, we give you our love."

And so through the Mission Boards of the churches in America came the day of glad tidings, not only to these little children of the mountains, but to many thousands in Porto Rico, whose bodies were made well and in whose hearts dawned the light of the knowledge of the love of God, through the gospel of His son.

Twelve years have passed now since our children of the palm-tree shack first saw the Flag float over the forts of San Juan. Carmelita and Dolores, bright and

lovely young women, are teachers now, in a mission school, and all the brothers and sisters are growing up to be strong and good and useful.

The splendid missionary work of the American churches has now extended throughout the island, and of all the great "happenings" in beautiful Porto Rico, the greatest is the transformation of character wrought by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The people look forward to the day when Statehood shall be given to the island and when Porto Rico shall add a star to the Flag.

They are trying to get ready for it by education, industry and obedience to law.

When the day comes we must (unless Hawaii or Alaska shall have "come in" in the meantime!) drop the question mark from our title, for Porto Rico will then be "STAR-49," and the desire of the Mission Boards is to help the children of our island to grow to be noble Christian men and women—true citizens of America.

PORTO RICAN NURSES (*Presbyterian Hospital*)

CHAPTER EIGHTH

THE CHILDREN OF CUBA

THE mention of Cuba brings to mind our own familiar old date, 1492, for it was on his first voyage that Columbus landed on the island, feeling quite sure that he had at last reached golden "Cipango." He was the more certain of this because the natives, while they were really trying to tell him the name of their island—"Cubanacan"—seemed to Columbus to be saying something about Kublai Khan, the great ruler of Marco Polo's countries! Anyway, whatever its name, "it was the most beautiful land that human eyes ever beheld," so Columbus said. (*America* had not yet been seen.)

As you remember, the great discoverer took possession of this beautiful island in the name of the King and Queen of Spain, and to Spain it belonged until the year 1898, when the people, with the help of the United States, gained their long-desired independence.

Under Spanish rule, and this means the rule of the Roman Catholic Church, the people were not educated; they were oppressed and very poor. They were not allowed to have the Bible, and could not have read it if they had had it.

But the Constitution of Free Cuba, which went into effect January 1, 1899, guaranteed religious liberty, and at once the missionary societies of many churches in the United States sent missionaries to

A HOME IN CUBA

Cuba. They were joyfully received. Were they not Americans? And had not the Americans been the saviors of Cuba?

Besides, the gospel the missionaries came to preach was entirely new to the people and they were eager to hear it.

Cuba has a population of about two millions. They are easily reached, for the island is compact and,

SUNDAY-SCHOOL AT CIEGO DE AVILA *(Baptist)*

unlike Porto Rico, has good roads—even railroads in all the most populous districts—and now in all parts of the island, a true Christianity is taught and lived by the missionaries, and the upright lives and unselfish ministries of the men and women thus engaged in doing good, have won the hearts of the people.

The Cuban Government has thus far made but poor provision for free public schools, and for this

reason, if for no other, there is great need of mission schools.

But there is another reason, for it is only in these schools and in the Protestant Sunday-schools that the

"IN OUR EVERY-DAY DRESSES"
GIRLS FROM THE G. O. ROBINSON ORPHANAGE, SAN JUAN, PORTO RICO

Bible can be studied and the children trained in that religion which transforms life and character. The hope for Cuba lies in thus training the children.

So in many places the missionaries have established day schools and Sunday-schools to which eager children come, and the teachers find their pupils most attractive and lovable. They are quick to learn, are very affectionate, and have a wonderful imagination

SUNLIGHT AND SHADOW

and memory. Teaching them is a pleasure, and especially delightful are the Bible lessons, for its beautiful stories are to these children new and fresh, and their interest in them is intense.

It is their delight, too, to commit to memory many verses of the Bible, and as they learn their minds

are all the time opening, and their bright, sweet faces show the improvement in their thoughts.

The Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church now conducts three schools in Cuba—at Guines, Nueva Paz and Sancti Spiritus.

Guines is a city of about nine thousand people; it lies in the midst of a rich agricultural district and is connected with Havana by railroad. The school is flourishing under the care of three teachers.

Nueva Paz is a few miles beyond Guines. It has one American and two Cuban teachers.

Away over to the eastward, two hundred miles from Havana, is the old, old town of Sancti Spiritus. It has a population of about twelve thousand and in it is the oldest church building in Cuba. It was begun and was probably finished before our Pilgrim Fathers had even started for Plymouth!

In these schools are many happy children growing up to useful manhood and womanhood, to make happy homes in Cuba, to be teachers, or perhaps trained nurses and physicians. Cuba has sore need of them all.

Already the Woman's Board has welcomed as teachers in her schools young women who years ago as little children ventured shyly into the first little mission or Sunday-schools.

They prove that it is worth while, richly worth while, to teach and help the children of Cuba.

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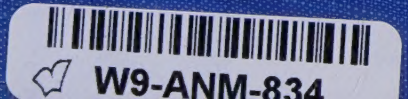
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